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Maine Peace Action Committee Newsletter

Maine Peace Action Committee

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Maine Peace Action Committee

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Maine Peace Action Committee (MPAC) was founded in 1974 with a special focus on ending the war in Indochina. MPAC has been concerned with our society's violent and militaristic nature, which is manifested in a lack of humane and progressive values and a tendency towards solving problems via destructive means.

Our general orientation takes the double focus of analyzing and opposing militarism, or the efforts to use nuclear weapons and other military means to solve human problems, and imperialism, or the efforts by powerful nations to use economic and military means to impose their will upon less powerful peoples.

Our nation's pursuit of these policies undermines its ability to deal with the needs of its own citizens and places us in greater danger of war. Our tax dollars are used to develop first strike capable weapons and to support repressive regimes abroad. Consequently, there are fewer dollars available for needed human services both here and abroad.

If we direct our energy and other resources into weapons systems, there is little left for creative solutions to problems such as the world food and fuel shortages which threaten our survival.

We have seen human needs are neglected by an existing government, and when that government represses groups attempting to meet those needs, violent upheaval has resulted. Our government's military economic support for such repressive regimes has embroiled us in armed conflicts which have escalated to full scale war and could mean inevitable global destruction.

We support efforts to deal with each of these problems since we see them as resulting and contributing to an economic and political system over which most of us have little control.

We in MPAC believe that while none of these efforts by itself can bring about a completely just society, together we can work toward more comprehensive solutions. We feel that we can best contribute by challenging militarism and

imperialism and proposing alternatives to these policies.

We find we can act effectively if we focus on a limited number of specific issues and campaigns.

We need projects which can:

1. unite people within our group
2. provide opportunities for action resulting in measurable achievement
3. link our efforts with national campaigns; and
4. demonstrate the dynamics of militarism and imperialism.

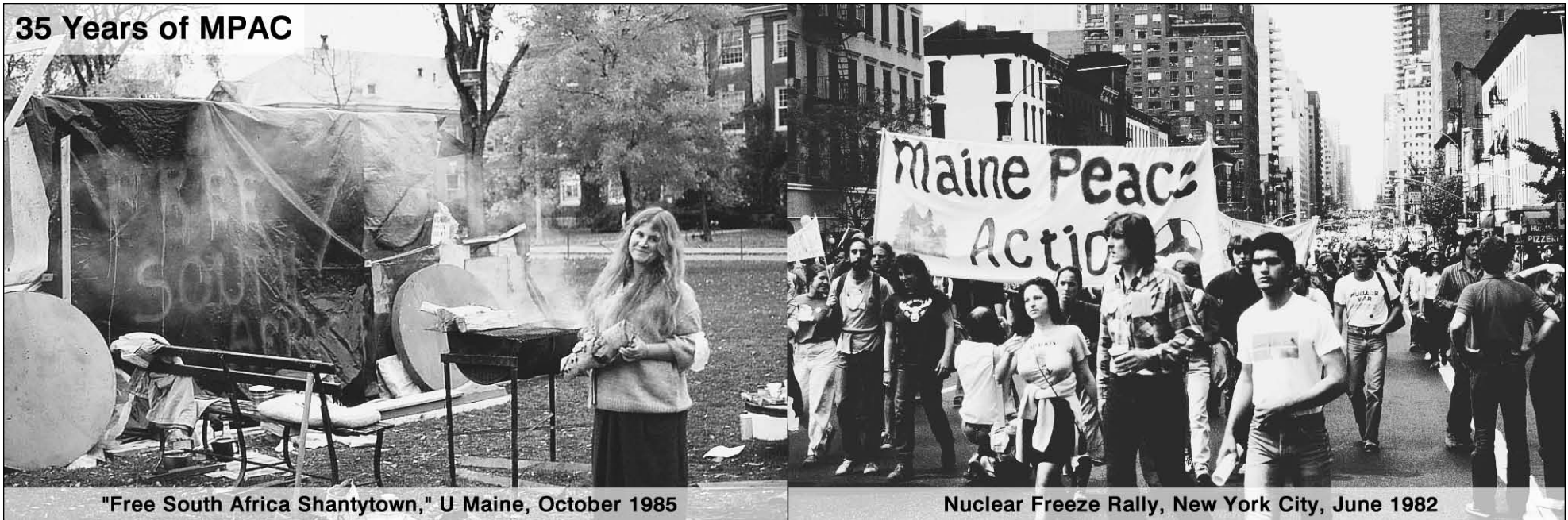
For our activities to be successful, we need to educate ourselves about issues, analyze the contributing factors, investigate alternative solutions, decide strategy for implementing alternatives, and share our understanding with the community to enlist their support.

MPAC believes that people united and working together can redefine our values and change our approach to problems so that we shall be able to live in a free and creative society; indeed, such efforts are imperative if we are to survive.

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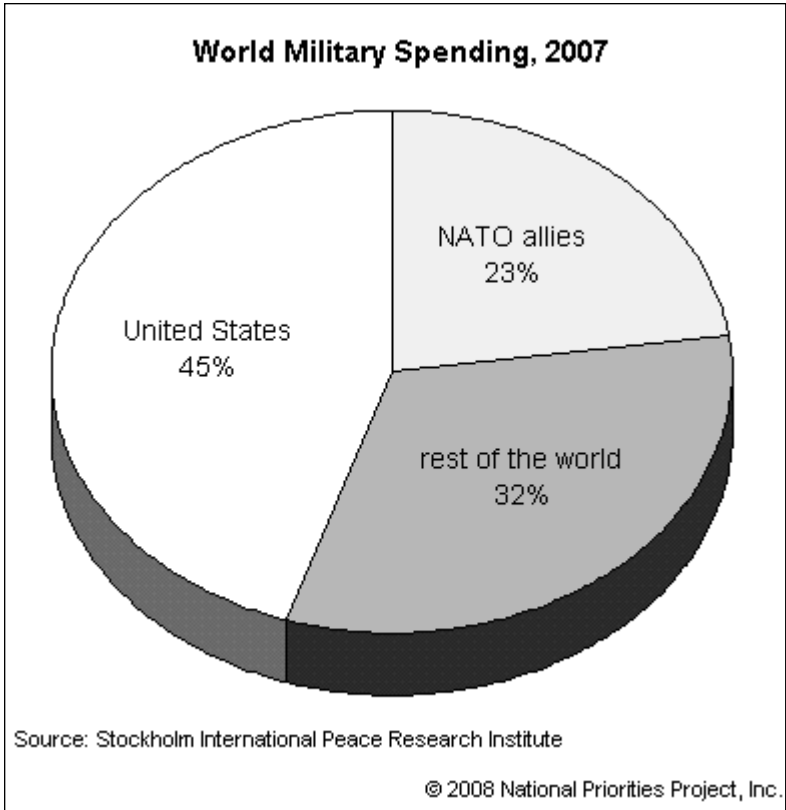


EDUCATION, NOT WARFARE: A LETTER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COMMUNITY

Attention University of Maine staff and students,

Your jobs are being lost, your tuition is rising, and your scholarships and financial aid is being slashed! Why? Because we are a part of a public institution that has been reportedly mandated by the powers above to cut 34.2 million dollars out of 2009 fiscal budget and 42.8 million in the next four years to help curb the effects of the current economic “crisis”. THIS IS RIDICULOUS!! 47 MILLION dollars from Maine tax payers went to spending on nuclear weapons in 2008 alone! This is enough money to give over 5000 University of Maine students a full one year scholarship. Why are talented professors and local community members losing their jobs and financial aid dependent students paying more out of pocket for their education then they can afford when we are spending preposterous amounts of money on “occupations” in Iraq and Afghanistan that the majority of this country disagrees with? Our bloated military budget is now directly effecting our access to, and quality of education (which is already very low compared to other developed countries). It is time we, as a university, let our representatives know that before they take a chunk out of the University of Maine’s budget there needs to be much greater cuts and changes to the oversized military budget.

Forty-seven million dollars in four years! The math is not that difficult: take a very high average professor salary of \$80,000 a year including benefits and research grants and then take 47 million and divide by that salary, we just lost 588 professors in the University of Maine system. Granted that the budget task force assigned to pin point where the cuts should come from would take a much more balanced approach, these cuts are going to none-the-less drastically affect us. The question that needs to be asked is what effect would this 47 million dollars have on other government expenditures, for example the military. Taking the 47 million dollars and dividing it by its four years, gives 11.75 million a year.



Taxpayers in Bangor, Maine will pay \$11.4 million for the military cost of securing energy in FY 2009 (includes Iraq war). For the same amount of money, any one of the following could be provided annually:

- 1,531 Scholarships for University Students
- 17,550 Homes with Renewable Electricity
- 3,598 People with Health Care
- 291 Public Safety Officers
- 89 Affordable Housing Units
- 1,638 Head Start Places for Children
- 216 Elementary School Teachers, or
- 150 Port Container Inspectors

National Priorities Project data, see <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/> for more information

Dividing that number by 515,400,000,000 which is the base budget for military spending in 2008 gives a number so small I wouldn’t even know what decimal place to call it. Again, granted this argument is bias in that the everyday military activity costs substantially higher then on a university campus, but when the majority of our country would like us to stop spending on Iraq and Afghanistan and end the two occupations, it begs to question why does this money have to come from universities where it has a huge impact, and not from the military where it is barely a crumb?

During times of economic “crisis” such as in the great depression and the current economy, it has been argued that wars or other military occupations spark economic growth and can potentially take economies out of their recessive state. The argument is that because the more government money spent on guns and bombs creates jobs for the unemployed and therefore more money and spending in the economy. This argument however has since been defeated mainly from the example of the Vietnam War where the United States was left in shambles economically with large levels of unemployment and families relying on food stamps. War disrupts trade and the notion of comparative advantage as well as creates dead weight loss to society with unnecessary destruction of infrastructure. Although it has been clearly documented that this argument is no longer valid, there are still policy

makers and political pundits that carry it around such as recent Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman saying in his blog, “The fact is that war is, in general, expansionary for the economy, at least in the short run...” We need to start standing up to these false assertions and demand that we not be told these lies again.

The question that I would like us all to raise is this: if we want to use government spending to spark economic growth and get us out of this recession, and the majority of the population doesn’t want us to be using military force in any country right now, then why not spend the money on things like, I don’t know, EDUCATION?!? Yes, I understand that President Obama has already passed many economic stimuli that were meant to help such social institutions, but at the same time he promised over and over again during his campaign that he is going to drastically increase military efforts in Afghanistan and any other country that “defies” the United States for that matter. The fact of the matter is that we are not living in a time of peace and so far, we do not have a pro-peace president to get us there.

It is important to note that these cuts are not the fault of the University of Maine or the new budget task force, for they are merely following direction from above, but it is equally important to note that they are our representation to politicians that are setting these priorities for us. It is then up to US to voice these concerns to them and let them know that enough is enough!

For more information on how your tax dollars are being spent, visit nationalpriorities.org.

—Adam Stern



WHO WILL STOP THE RAIN?

I have been born with every advantage any boy growing up could ever hope for in this life and yet, since as long as I can remember I have felt a profound sadness lurking deep within me. I have tried to locate the origin of this unhappiness in hopes that I could attempt to isolate it to some specific event but to no avail. As I grew older I tried to overcome this feeling by applying an assortment of disciplinary activities such as model making, martial arts, philosophy, and various forms of digital art. But even after pursuing all these self orientated endeavors to their climax, the feelings of intense sorrow would return; beseeching my eyes to weep a lifetime of amassed tears, but the pride of my ego was too strong and

did I would be annulling the essence of all the past sufferings from the countless life forms that brought me into fruition. The desires of my ego suddenly became temporarily silenced and for a brief time I could see the world present-at-hand and knew exactly what I had to do. It was during this period that I decided to join the Maine Peace Action Committee (MPAC) in an effort to understand the injustices of the world to which my eyes had been previously shut and to learn about how to make a difference as a group.

As time went on, I ended up developing a draft of my own personal preamble and pledge as a means to focus my way of life towards the betterment of humanity. It should be said

For when every human has become long deceased and our bodies retreat back to that which from we came, fear not to dwellings of futility to our seemingly infinitesimal existence; for our expeditions will remain uninterrupted as they travel past the surly bonds of Earth throughout the galactic dreamscape of celestial bodies and unto yearning alien eyes, who seek answers, just as we, and will learn that there were human beings, and they triumphed.

Preamble of Reconciliation

As an aspiring member of the sentient body I hereby acknowledge the overwhelming presence of ignorance and suffering which have plagued the shared end-goals of the human race and all of our earthly constituents from the dawn of our creation. Finding these burdens to be self-evident as contingent components of our creaturely designs by which nature has bestowed upon us, we therefore, upon receipt of this universal truth, take the noble task upon ourselves, as principle agents on the path to enlightenment, to spread the supremacy of our goodwill towards the betterment of humankind and all forms of life.

Oath of Reconciliation

I swear to responsibly exercise my powers of intellect in a manner that encourages a prosperous way of life for all sentient beings through the charity of wisdom, goodwill, and love.

I swear to remain resolute to the virtues of my character among which honesty above all else shall remain in permanent exercise as a way of life.

I swear to respect and honor the values, laws, and religions of our civilization to the extent that such principles do not deviate, dominate, or undermine the supreme commandment of the heart, to which its voice shall take absolute precedence in times of uncertainty, serving as the chief ambassador to our humanity.

I swear to use all available methods of diplomacy and non-violence to defend all forms of life against ignorance and suffering.

I swear to remain steadfast in the face of absolute despair; when all chances for victory have failed and defeat is imminent; for when all the powers of my intellect, diplomacy, and non-violent means have been exhausted and when the voice of my heart speaks to me in tears, to sacrifice my life-force towards the betterment of all things.

For my body is but a mere vessel; and my heart its skipper who compasses the ocean of ignorance in the pursuit of Truth.

For my name is: Johnathan James Recor
*And **I am** the savior of the broken, the beaten, and the damned.*

Despite my struggle to produce a cure for my sadness, I could feel a familiar drift from afar, for deep within the recesses of my thoughts a troubling question came yawning towards me from blackly beyond, for if my ego were to be dissolved among these doctrines set in motion, who would stop the rain?

—The Protagonist



always emerged at that final moment of redemption; restraining the freedom of my outcry, sentencing the rain of my tears to be flushed within a watery tomb of porcelain walls.

Combined with a series of failed relationships, having no friends, and facing persistent stresses both at home and college, I shamefully admit that there were times in my life when I didn't want to go on living. Out of desperation I even sunk so low as to literally beg for companionship but none came to my rescue. Embarrassed and humiliated, I knew that something was different about me, for how could I be blessed to love all I came across with great earnestness and affection and yet be denied any care in return? For it seemed that all the traditions and graces my family had worked so hard to teach me truly did not apply or were not welcome to the peers of my generation.

And at those trying moments of intense despair, anguish and abandonment I heard another voice crying out to me. For at that instant, my heart embraced the spirit of my ancestral line; focusing the vestiges of what little physical and emotional energy I had left, and spoke upon behalf of my sanity with unwavering honesty to "not give up". The will power of nature resounded within me and it was then that I realized that I should not quit on myself because if I

however that the doctrine I am about to share is a work-in-progress and represents a set of standards that is uniquely personal to my outlook of engaging the world; demanding at times extreme forms of discipline, respect and patience and should not be practiced in full essence, but rather, in proportion to your innermost feelings; for your heart will always remain in bondage until you create peace, not only with yourself, but also, with all the beings you encounter throughout your life's journey. The final effect will be the greatest feat ever to be accomplished by a species and will serve as the finest hour the universe has ever known since its conception.



WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE PEACE

There are many different reasons to be against the global war on terror. One of the greatest motivations in the past has been forced conscription because of the way it affects everyone in the population. Unfortunately, the war on terror has been waged using enlistment (generally of the poor) as well as defense contractors (mercenaries) which has kept Americans in a state of neutrality, where many people don't think we should still be in Iraq or Afghanistan but are unwilling to spend time actively trying to bring about change. There is a movement that has been exploding over the internet for the last 7 years which has created a new and very different group of activists that are just as interested in ending war, but their ideas are not often discussed.

I have only recently become consciously against war. I don't have any close relatives or friends that have served in Iraq. I don't know anyone that has died. My motivations for peace activism are not directly from personal suffering as the war had had little effect on me. It was the documentary Loose Change which completely changed the way I thought about the war, although I was not aware of the full effect it would have at the time. Loose Change depicts some of the many questions citizens have voiced concerning the official 9/11 story. I remember being absolutely horrified after watching the film. I hadn't really thought about 9/11 much since it happened, but the ideas presented in the film seemed like they could be legitimate. Several days later I completely dismissed the idea and managed not to think about it for several months.

I have since extensively researched 9/11/01 and have come to much stronger conclusions. After many documentary films, hundreds of web articles, several meetings with local concerned citizens, a few books, and a significant amount of self doubt later I can confidently say that I believe that the attacks on 9/11 could have been prevented and that they were exploited as a pretext for a never ending war on terror and a crackdown on American civil liberties. This conclusion has been far from easy to come too. I've experienced many forms of personal attacks because of this idea from everyone from strangers to family. My parents have suggested I seek professional help. Among groups of my friends the topic of 9/11 is off limits. I've experienced the difficult truth that investigating 9/11 requires persistence, an open mind, and the internet to achieve.

Wikipedia states that false flag operations are "covert operations conducted by governments, corporations, or other organizations, which are designed to deceive the public in such a way that

the operations appear as though they are being carried out by other entitle." False flag attacks or government sponsored terror is not a new idea. The Reichstag fire in 1933 was blamed on Van der Lubbe who was a member of the communist party. The event was subsequently exploited by Hitler to suspend civil liberties and allowed the Nazis to seize the government. It is now largely believed that it was members of the Nazi party that initiated the fire in order to sway public opinion. In the 1953 CIA coup of Iran, we used terrorism and false flag operations to remove democratically elected Mohammad Mossadegh from power. Operation Gladio was sponsored again by the CIA and involved setting up terrorist cells around Europe following World War II. Operation Gladio has also been accused of using false flag operations. The famous Gulf of Tonkin

think it is a mistake to not work together to achieve these same goals. Much like the civil rights movement laid the ground work for the Vietnam peace movement, I think the modern peace movement could do the same for 9/11 truth. The peace movement is much more organized and experienced than the 9/11 truth movement, but I also think 9/11 truth is capable of motivating otherwise neutral masses as is evident from the explosion of this material on the internet.

Many Americans (including myself) are having a difficult time seeing how we can have any influence on modern foreign relations without acknowledging that most terrorism in the world is government sponsored, including 9/11/01. This information has personally lit a fire under me that I didn't know existed. I think it's

foolish to mock or insult people like myself based on what little information you have seen in the mass media. We know our government plans, executes, and covers up terrorist attacks around the world. Why is it so difficult to think it couldn't happen here, considering it has been done in the past? Ignoring this may seem like a patriotic duty to some but know that it is only a short term solution and without a mass uprising in this country we will be at war for a lifetime. Maybe it's just my inexperience but I cannot see how there can ever be peace without acknowledging this truth.



incident was used as a pretext for invading Southeast Asia. Forty years later, due to declassification of NSA documents we now know this event was essentially fabricated by the government. Operation Northwoods is a declassified government document that planned using false flag terrorism in the United States that would be blamed on Cuba as a pretext to invade. The plans, which were drafted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1962, included hijackings, bombings, sniper attacks, and many other terrorist activities in Washington DC, Florida, and elsewhere in the United States. Google any of these events for more information, as I've summarized very complex events in only a few sentence but I want to show that the United States has been sponsoring and covering up terrorist attacks for a long time and it is only discovered many years later as documents become declassified. The families of 9/11 victims shouldn't have to wait forty years to get justice.

One thing that I cannot understand is why there is a distancing between the 9/11 truth movement and the anti war movement. From my perspective they are one in the same. Both groups want to end the war on terror but their angles are awkwardly different at best. There is no reason not to investigate these events for yourself. I

There is such a wealth of information on the internet. Any open minded person that is interested in what I've written should check out maine911truth.org. This website was put together by my friend Stephan Shaw as well as other Maine social activists and contains a wealth of links to many different videos, books, and web resources. Check out a few of the films, take notes, and use the internet to verify facts for yourself. 9/11 truth has been stereotyped by the corporate media as many things. We are just regular folks trying to bring about change. Any misrepresentation of facts or incorrect research is of great interest to the 9/11 truth community as accuracy is our primary goal. If there is enough local interest in the Bangor area I would love to set up a meeting for concerned citizens to discuss the events of 9/11, distribute literature and films, and discuss Maine peace activism. Questions, comments, or concerns should be directed to pmckech@gmail.com.

"In the beginning of a change, the Patriot is a scarce man, Brave, Hated, and Scorned. When his cause succeeds however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a Patriot." Mark Twain

—Paul Mckechnie

COMMUNITY REVIVALIST

It was March. Everything was thawing, the earth, the people. My friend and I were walking, letting our feet sink into the soil of front lawns.

I stood to allow the appreciation of the lands graceful decent into the river. The trees were naked and proud after shaking off heavy layers of snow. We stood on a footbridge over the railroad tracks. I was imagining how the land would look without the tracks, a scar of industrialization. Then my friend shook me with these words, “Orono is good, but too bad it’s not more populated.”



This alarmed me because I know the population of Orono is sufficient. My friend was under the impression that more population means more community, more action. I disagree.

My town demands a revival of community in order to improve the rate of wholesome human interaction. Community must be pursued with heightened vigor, by the youth especially. We need rummage sales, community suppers, and block parties. A strong community will act as a strong insurance policy as the world changes. By supporting local artisans, entrepreneurs, we can mindfully push corporate America, in the form of chain restaurants and big box stores away. Thus avoiding the unhealthy blanching of the natural and human landscape.

Healthy and interactive communities allow the individual to feel more compassion for his or her neighbor, whether the neighbor is the river or a person. Perhaps regular, non- institutionalized, community interaction would lead to a rise in local community concern for the global community. Perhaps folks would pick up the book *Knitting for Peace* by Betty Christiansen and start up a knitting circle with the intention of sending

the work to those who are in need, much like the organization afghans for Afghans in which individuals develop positive relationships with Afghanistan communities by creating blankets and sweaters with compassion. Perhaps the community could have regular harvest suppers throughout the summer in order to display the fruits of their garden and provide advice for individuals to start their own garden. If people are concerned about a certain local or global issues, why not put on a few street theatre skits?

It is high time for isolation to discontinue. In this world we cannot afford to allow communities to dwindle. Communities must persevere in order to remain unique to the landscape and to shake off corporate America. An America run on non

compassionate greed which leads to the destruction of farmlands by the presence of big box stores, and a lack of support for local businesses due to cost differences.

Community theatre, progressive student groups, a volunteer run thrift shop, local businesses, and a community garden represent community in Orono. These aspects of Orono provide a solid foundation on which more community, especially among young folk, such as my friend, can be constructed.

I am hungry for community and so is the world. Let us bust some boxes and make some circles!

See **SUPPER** on Page 6

COMMUNITY KETTLE BREAD

- 3 cups all-purpose or bread flour, more for dusting
 - ¼ teaspoon instant yeast
 - 1¼ teaspoons salt
- Add cornmeal or wheat bran as needed.

1. In a large bowl combine flour, yeast and salt all together (because you are going to let the bread rise forever, activating the yeast in a warm sugar water is not necessary). Add a little less then 1 5/8 cups water (depending on the consistency of the flour), and stir until blended; dough will be shaggy and sticky (should be able to stay in a ball for several minutes before collapsing). Cover bowl with cloth towel. Let dough rest for as long as it needs or you want. This could be 12-18 hours or a day and a half. If it is rising too fast you have put the bread in too warm of a place. To solve this problem, punch the dough down and let it rise again in a cooler (temperature) location. For slower rising and a better overall taste, let the dough rise in the fridge (this will take quite a while but make sure you don’t forget about it).
2. Dough is ready when its surface is dotted with bubbles. Lightly flour a work surface and place dough on it; sprinkle it with a little more flour and fold it over on itself once or twice. Cover loosely with a towel and let rest about 15 minutes.
3. Using just enough flour to keep dough from sticking to work surface or to your fingers, gently and quickly shape dough into a ball. Generously coat a cotton towel (not terry cloth) with flour, wheat bran or cornmeal; put dough seam side down on towel and dust with more flour, bran or cornmeal. Cover with another cotton towel and let rise for about 2 hours. When it is ready, dough will be more than double in size and will not readily spring back when poked with a finger.
4. At least a half-hour before dough is ready, heat oven to 450 degrees. Put a 6- to 8-quart heavy covered pot (cast iron, enamel, Pyrex or ceramic) in oven as it heats. When dough is ready, carefully remove pot from oven. Slide your hand under towel and turn dough over into pot, seam side up; it may look like a mess, but that is O.K. Shake pan once or twice if dough is unevenly distributed; it will straighten out as it bakes. Cover with lid and bake 30 minutes, then remove lid and bake another 15 to 30 minutes, until loaf is beautifully browned. Cool on a rack.

Yield: One 1½-pound loaf.
(Adapted from a *New York Times* recipe)

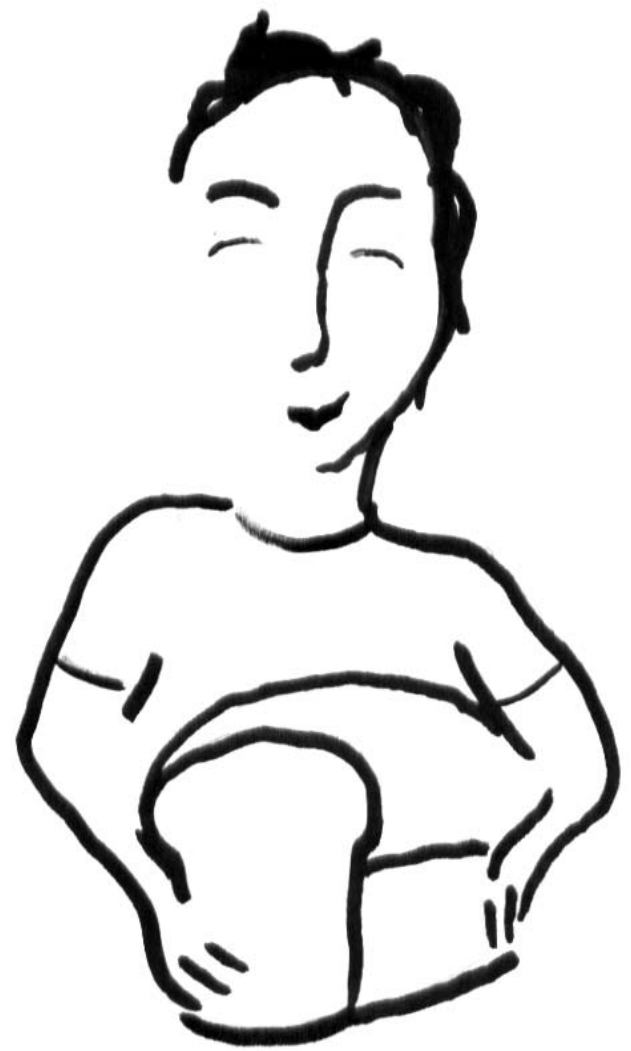
Why this recipe is amazing for you and your community

- Did you SEE the ingredient list... How can something so delicious come from such basic and easy to attain materials?!?!? Wow.
- Because you can let the bread rise for so long it doesn’t take much time management to have a constant loaf of bread sitting around
- If you live in a house with multiple people, you can each take turns starting and finishing the breads when the last loaf is running out (which is usually very fast). You can also share the cost of bulk ingredients together making the price of this deliciousness almost nothing.
- Because it is so easy to learn it is very easy to teach as well. By sharing this great recipe you are empowering people to let go of low price breads that are filled with additives and make food for themselves at a much lower cost and a much higher reward (in taste and self-satisfaction).
- That said, beware this is a “gateway” recipe that can lead you down the road of further baking and cooking for yourself and avoiding fast unhealthy options.

SUPPER
(continued from Page 5)

Something to eat at a community supper

- Necessary items:
- A big pot
 - Olive oil
 - Nutritional yeast, a super food for vegans and vegetarians especially!
 - Bragg’s Liquid Amino
 - A bay leaf, grown on your window sill
 - Local carrots, that last throughout the winter, shriveled and strong
 - Local onions
 - Local garlic
 - Lentils



Pour as many lentils as you think is fit for a lentil soup into a pot, remember they expand! Then pour a lot of water into the pot, at least three times more than the lentils, dribble some olive oil in if you can afford it. Bring to a boil. While you are waiting for the water to boil, cut up the carrots and onions and garlic. Allow the water to boil for a couple of minutes, bring to a simmer. Cook for about a half an hour. Add the veggies (if you want a different flavor, feel free to sauté the onions and garlic before you toss them into the soup). Cook until the veggies are tender enough for you. While they are cooking, add a bay leaf, splashes of Bragg’s, and nutritional yeast to your liking. Enjoy!

—Aya Mares

my rainbow race
by pete seeger

one blue sky above us
one ocean lapping all our shore
one earth so green and round
who could ask for more
and because I love you
i'll give it one more try
to show my rainbow race
it's too soon to die
it's too soon to die

some folks wanna be like an ostrich
bury their heads in the sand
some hope that plastic dreams
will unclench all greedy hands
some wanna take the easy way
poisons, bombs they think we need 'em
don't you know you can't kill all the unbelievers?
there's no shortcut to freedom

one blue sky above us
one ocean lapping all our shores
one earth so green and round
who could ask for more
and because I love you
i'll give it one more try
to show my rainbow race
it's too soon to die
it's too soon to die

go tell all the little children
tell all the mothers and fathers too
this is our last chance to learn to share
what's been given to me and you

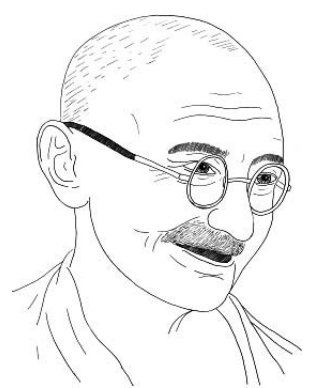
one blue sky above us
one ocean lapping all our shores
one earth so green and round
who could ask for more
and because i promised you
i'll give it one more try
to show my rainbow race
it's too soon to die
it's too soon to die

words and music by pete seeger, 1967
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thanks to www.peteseeger.net



“All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all the others. I cannot detach myself from the wickedest soul.”

—Gandhi



“It is easy enough to be friendly to one’s friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.”

—Gandhi

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.”

—Martin Luther King Jr.



“And so Happy Christmas for black and for white, for yellow and red, let’s stop all the fight.”

—John Lennon



“What we need to do is learn to respect and embrace our differences until our differences don’t make a difference in how we are treated.”

—Yolanda King



“I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to.”

—Alice Walker



PODCASTS AVAILABLE AT
<http://peacecast.us>

Here is a list of audio podcasts posted recently to peacecast.us. They all are available for free listening off the web or free downloading to your iPod or other device that can play mp3 audio files (iTunes and rss feeds available).

Cheri Honkala: Economic Human Rights

Cheri Honkala of the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign spoke on the University of Maine campus Thursday April 2. The podcast is her 61-minute program and extensive question and answer session. Honkala just left Maine after an extensive tour.

March 21 Teach-In on WERU

This is the podcast for the WERU Weekend Voices/peacecast.us Special featuring our Active Community Teach-in on *New Strategies for Organizing in the Obama Era*. This program broadcast on Saturday April 4, 2009 on Community Radio WERU. The event was held Saturday March 21, 2009 in Bangor at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

David Roediger: Writing Socialist History

A long-time scholar-activist, his books include *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* and *How Race Survived U.S. History: From Settlement and Slavery to the Obama Phenomenon*. Professor Roediger's main focus is the life and work of his late friend and colleague, the labor activist and historian for the Industrial Workers of the World, Fred Thompson. Thompson died in 1987.

Doug Allen: Gandhi in Times of Terror

Just after returning from India, Doug gave a talk based on the material from his article (p. 8) in this issue of the *MPAC Newsletter*. The full Thursday Feb. 19. program title is “Recent Reflections from India: the November 26, 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and Gandhi in times of terror.”

Sarah Bigney: The Two Fair Trade Movements

This podcast features a talk University of Maine graduate Sarah Bigney gave on Thursday September 25, 2008:

“The Two Fair Trade Movements: Bridging the Divide Between Buying Coffee and Repealing NAFTA”

Sarah Bigney is organizer at the Maine Fair Trade Campaign, a statewide coalition of 50 organizations for building a just, sustainable, and democratic economy. Check out their site for information on current campaigns, including the one to oppose the Panama Free Trade Agreement.

IS NONVIOLENCE RELEVANT WHEN DEALING WITH TERRORISM?

My major reason for going to India in December and January was to deliver the keynote address at a conference on “Gandhi in Times of Terror.” There was tremendous media and public interest, primarily because of the November 26–29, 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, the largest city, financial capital, and Bollywood film center of India.

The usual view, in India and in the United States, is that proponents of nonviolence are largely irrelevant when it comes to dealing with modern terrorism. Terrorists have no interest in nonviolent dialogue and reconciliation. The only thing that they understand and that can stop them is greater violence. We need policymakers who are willing to make the hard realistic decisions and use necessary violent force in dealing with terrorism.

This is true even when it comes to Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian hero, often regarded as a saint, and the world’s best-known and most influential proponent of *ahimsa* or nonviolence. Indians repeatedly looked perplexed that I would even relate Gandhi to times of terror. In their view, Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence and his nonviolent activism have nothing to do with issues of terrorism. Some claim that Gandhi is well intentioned, at best, but he is naïve and irrelevant when it comes to dealing with terrorism. Others charge that Gandhi, at worst, in his insistence on absolute nonviolence, is part of the problem; he is complicit with the terrorist violence, since he opposes the violent responses necessary for dealing with terrorism.

In this article, after providing some of the background and present analysis of the Mumbai terrorism, I shall submit that an intelligent, flexible nonviolent response is very relevant for dealing with issues of terrorism.

Mumbai Terrorism, India, and Pakistan

Just as “9-11” became part of our vocabulary when referring to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Indians speak of “26-11” when referring to the 26 November 2008 Mumbai terrorism. A big difference is that India and Mumbai have had a history of numerous terrorist

tion to Afghanistan—may represent the most dangerous situation in the world today. India and Pakistan have fought three wars: The 1947–1948 war after Partition and focusing on Kashmir; the 1965 war again focusing on Kashmir; and the 1971 war around the East Pakistan secessionist demands that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. In the late 1990s, India and Pakistan

tested nuclear weapons. The Kargil armed conflict in Kashmir in 1999 and ensuing conflicts threatened to lead to nuclear war, with some estimating the possibility of more than 100 million deaths.

The situation remains unstable, tense, and unpredictable. The pro-Washington Pakistan government is weak and corrupt. It is no match for its military, which contains key members who are pro-Islamist fundamentalists, sympathetic to and supporters of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and involved in the anti-Indian insurgency in Kashmir. If the government turned over key Pakistanis for trial in India, it would lack popular support and would likely be overthrown by a military coup.



attacks, including an attack on the Indian Parliament and many acts of terrorism earlier in 2008. A second major difference is that India quickly claimed that it had overwhelming proof, including recorded messages during the attacks, of those responsible, and this all leads back to Pakistan.

In India, often identified as the world’s largest democracy, there are upcoming general elections for all 543 seats in the Lok Sabha (the national parliament). The elections will take place in five phases, starting on April 16, and the results will be announced on May 16. In India’s parliamentary system, the winning party, which is really the winning party coalition in the multi-party elections, chooses the prime minister. The present government is ruled by the United Progressive Alliance led by the Indian National Congress (INC) party and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The main opposition and previous ruling coalition is the National Democratic Alliance led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). There is also a Third Front, consisting of the Left Front and others, as well as other parties that sometimes join with ruling coalitions.

After the Mumbai terrorism, rightwing Hindutva parties, usually BJP and others in the National Democratic Alliance, were calling for revenge and for war, with some using heightened anti-Muslim rhetoric and with the desire to destroy Pakistan once and for all. Fortunately, to India’s credit, there have been no anti-Muslim communal riots and many Indian Muslims have outspokenly condemned the Mumbai terrorist attacks. As long as the world community has condemned the Mumbai terrorism and criticized Pakistan’s role, most Indians have not advocated immediate violent retaliation.

Over 170 people were killed. Of the ten named terrorists, all Pakistanis, nine were killed and one, Ajmar Amir Kasba, was captured. The Pakistani militant group Laskar-e-Taiba was most responsible. India demanded that the Pakistani government shut down the “terrorist groups” located in its territory and turn over those responsible for organizing, training, and coordinating the Mumbai terrorism, including former officers in Pakistan’s Army and members of its Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) agency. In February, the Government of Pakistan conceded that at least some of the planning for the Mumbai terrorist attacks took place in its territory, and several arrests were made.

India-Pakistani relations—as well as the related unstable situation within Pakistan and its rela-

60
YEARS
LATER

Is the
Mahatma's
message still
relevant?

From *Swagat* (meaning "Welcome"), the domestic in-flight magazine of Air India, January 2008



Indian woman is consoled by a relative as she grieves the death of her two children in the Mumbai terrorist attack (AP photo/Guinder Osan)

When Pakistan responded in February, admitting that the terrorist strikes were partly planned on its soil, their Federal Investigation Agency posed 30 specific questions about India’s evidence. In March, India provided Pakistan with a response to the 30 questions. The textual response is only a few pages, but the appendices include compact discs and over 400 pages of primary documentation. Once again, the focus is on Lashkar-e-Taiba for training and equipping the terrorists and financing and directing the terrorist campaign. The compact discs contain audio conversations between the terrorists and their controllers or handlers in Pakistan. Other appendices contain considerable forensic evidence and data records of the mobile phones used by the terrorists during the attacks. The Indian Home Minister said that India expects Pakistan to move quickly on its investigation and to take the appropriate actions.

Nonviolence and Terrorism

While in India, I was warned by friends that in the post-26-11 atmosphere of anger and heightened tension, I should be careful what I said. When Indians heard, and were usually surprised by, my interpretation that Mahatma Gandhi, the exemplary proponent of peace and nonviolence, would have advocated using force to stop the terrorists during the 26-29, 2008 attacks, they listened with great attentiveness. Very encouraging to me was the sympathetic reaction of the majority of the conference participants, media, and public to such Gandhian

insights and contributions in dealing with roots causes and present conditions of the violent crisis. Some Mainers were equally surprised when they heard me say that Gandhi would advocate such a use of force and that I seemed to be sympathetic. I’ll now clarify this surprising interpretation.

Most Gandhi admirers, as well as critics, uncritically assume that Mahatma Gandhi, so well known as the absolute proponent of *ahimsa* (nonviolence), would never endorse violent force, even to stop terrorists. This usually renders Gandhi passive and irrelevant when dealing with terrorists and terrorism.

First, let me briefly clarify my use of “terrorism,” since those with power usually use the term in very uncritical and self-serving ways. I’ll then indicate how Gandhi broadens and deepens the meaning of this concept. Terrorism always involves violence, but most violence—such as using homophobic language when demeaning homosexuals, acting in racist a manner, or even killing someone caught during a robbery—has nothing to do with terrorism. Terrorism always involves the use of terror, but, once again, most terror—such as the terror of being struck by lightning, of being alone, or of death—does not involve terrorism. Terrorism is a specific kind of violence that involves terror.

Terrorism consists of acts and policies that are intentional, are violent (either direct, indirect, or threatening), involve terror (extreme fear or dread), and are directed mainly at civilian populations, with the objective of achieving certain political or other goals. By this definition, the acts of 9/11 and 26/9 are clearly acts of terrorism, as

are the acts of someone who enters a school and starts shooting students and others. This is generally acknowledged. But by this definition, the August 1945 dropping of atomic bombs on Japan, the March 19, 2003 U.S. “shock and awe” bombings that launched the current U.S. war on Iraq, and “normal” corporate pharmaceutical and other policies that intentionally deny unaffordable HIV/AIDS medication to millions of Africans or unaffordable healthcare and medication to millions of U.S. citizens who suffer and die preventable diseases and deaths are policies and acts of terror and terrorism.

Gandhi is remarkable in broadening and deepening the concepts of violence and terrorism. In addition to suicide bombers and other individual acts of terrorism, Gandhi addresses economic and corporate terrorism, state and political terrorism, military terrorism, psychological terrorism, cultural terrorism, religious terrorism, and educational terrorism. We usually ignore the fact that violence and terrorism are complex and multidimensional, and we also ignore the structural violence and terrorism of the status quo, of business as usual.

Second, Gandhi certainly upholds nonviolence as an absolute principle, and he repeatedly asserts that he does not deviate from this absolute ideal. So how can I possibly claim that Gandhi would advocate the use of force, even occasional violent force, in order to stop terrorists and other perpetrators of extreme violence?

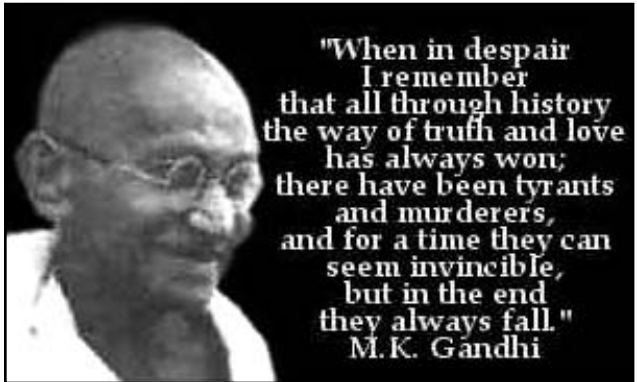


What makes Gandhi interesting, complex, nuanced, and relevant is his practical struggle with how you apply the absolute ideal of nonviolence to complex, difficult, particular situations, such as Mumbai terrorist attacks. Ninety-nine percent of the time we have long-term preventative and short-term interventionist nonviolent options. We do not think, feel, speak, or act nonviolently either because we are ignorant and unaware of nonviolent options, are trapped in our egos, don’t care, are greedy, find it is inconvenient, lack ethical sensitivity, are cowards afraid to intervene, or for other reasons. Sometimes, even in extreme cases, we should absorb suffering and violence because this offers educational and transformative possibilities. For example, if I absorb the violence and suffering without striking

Gandhi also equated violence with exploitation. If economic power is wielded to perpetuate unjust relations, then violence is taking place, and remaining silent condones the violence.

back in kind, the perpetrator of violence, even some individual or state or corporate terrorists, may be startled, unsettled in terms of their stereotypes and expectations, shamed into stopping, sense that I'm not "the enemy," and perhaps even sense that we have some humanity in common or at least that we can engage in some dialogue.

However, there are cases in which no nonviolent options have any possibility for dealing with violence. The terrorist, in the act of killing innocent human beings, may have no interest in engaging in dialogue, and being willing to suffer or offering one's life has no possibility of stopping the ongoing killing and no transformative possibilities. Not to stop the terrorist makes one complicit with the ongoing killing. Gandhi writes of a surprising number of such cases, even using titles such as "killing as *ahimsa* (nonviolence)." How do we respond to the armed lunatic in the act of shooting others? How do we respond to the rapist in the act of raping another person? How do we respond to malaria-carrying insects or to monkeys or dogs that are menacing human life? In such cases, Gandhi says that forceful violent



intervention may be necessary since it is the most nonviolent thing we can do.

We must emphasize a key point for proponents of nonviolence that distinguishes this from most justifications of violence. Such violence may be necessary, but it is never moral. It is tragic, since it represents human failure. We should be saddened and never glorify violence. Since Gandhi upholds the absolute ideal of nonviolence, even during such violent interventions, we should minimize the intensity and duration of our violence, work for nonviolent reconciliation, and

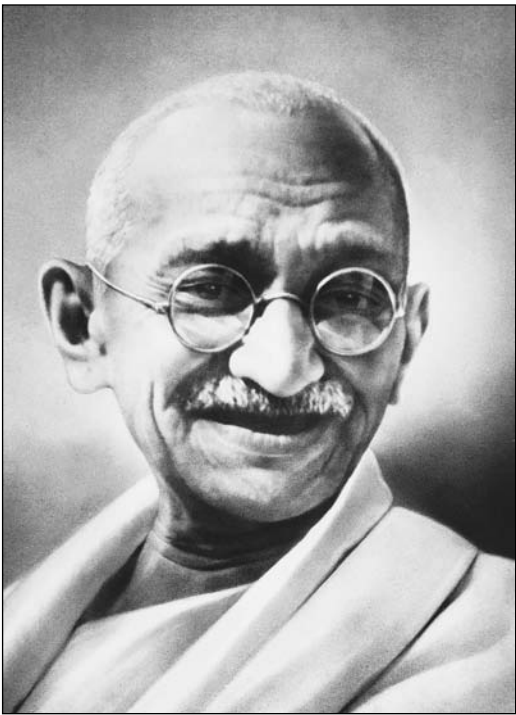


Gandhi on Dandi Salt March, 1930

do everything possible to prevent the repetition of conditions that gave rise to terrorism and other violence.

For me, such a nonviolent orientation has much to offer. It makes the approach of those of us dedicated to nonviolent theory and practice much more significant and relevant when trying to understand and deal with modern terrorism. It opens up lines of communication and engagement with others who simply dismiss nonviolence as irrelevant for dealing with extreme violence and terrorism. It offers us possibilities for broadening and deepening our understanding of violence and terrorism, nonviolence and peace and justice; for taking short-term and long-term preventative educational and other socialization steps to minimize violence and conditions leading to structural and individual terrorism; and, when all else fails and there are no nonviolent options, to use minimal necessary violent force without exacerbating, glorifying, and spreading the roots cause and causal conditions resulting in violence.

—Doug Allen



PODCAST AVAILABLE

Please visit <http://peacecast.us> for a podcast of the talk Doug gave based on this article, "Recent Reflections from India: the November 26, 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and Gandhi in times of terror."



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Maine Peace Action Committee

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"We must be the change we wish to see."
-Gandhi

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— 10:00 5K FUN RUN —

MAIN COURT

- 11:00 Native American Drumming
- 11:30 HOPE Festival Singers
- 12:00 Zachary Field's Amazing Juggling
- 12:45 Improv Theater
- 1:15 The Peregrine Puppets
- 2:00 International Student Dancers
- 2:30 **DAVID MALLET**, renowned folk singer
- 3:00 Community Dance of HOPE



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- Reducing Home Energy Costs
- Cool Starts with You
- Fun with Wind and Solar
- Creating Community Gardens
- Making a Solar Cooker
- National Health Care: Change that Works
- Recycled Crafts
- Talking Circles

STAGE 2 (UPSTAIRS)

- 12:00 Improv Theater workshop
- 1:00 **ELIOT COLEMAN**, Keynote: "Farm and Food Security"
- 2:00 Yoga workshop with Bunny Barclay

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Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individual members of MPAC and other university and community activists. They do not necessarily express the views of other MPAC members or of the group as a whole. We know that other readers may not agree with all that is stated in this issue, and we encourage your response.

The Maine Peace Action Committee has its general meeting every Tuesday at 7:10 PM in the Virtue Room of the Maples Building on the University of Maine Campus. Meeting times and dates may change. MPAC often has subcommittees working on topics of special interest to current members. MPAC also organizes film series, speakers, teach-ins, workshops, concerts, reading groups, demonstrations, and other peace and justice actions. For more information on MPAC, call 581-3860. If you are interested in peace education and activism, please join us. <http://www.umaine.edu/mpac/>

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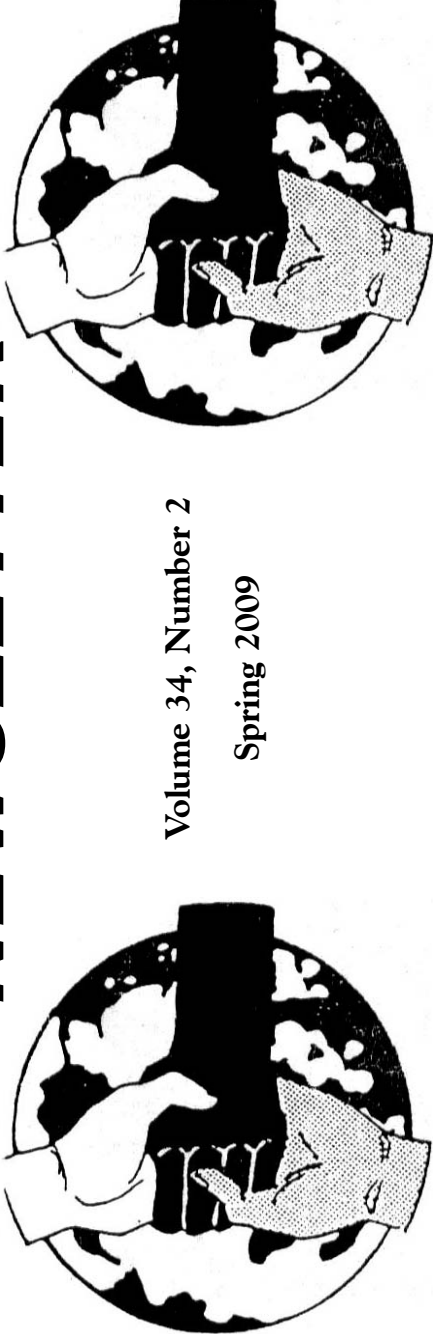
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